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House of Representatives

MAINTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS ON THE BORDER!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. *Sensenbrenner*) and all of those on the Republican side who are so concerned about my district. I represent the California border between Mexico and the United States.

This so-called fence that you want to put in my district is really a giant public works project that does enormous harm. I wish you were equally concerned about the 50 million gallons of sewage that flows into my district that we should be treating. I wish you were concerned about the legal border crossings, that take four or five hours some days. I wish you would be concerned about my local health facilities who treat the undocumented and refund those dollars.

But, no, you want to put a public works project in that waives all existing environmental laws necessary to ensure the construction of roads, barriers, cut and fills, taking down mountains. This would result in an enormous waste of millions of Federal and State dollars that have already been contributed to restore and protect this area in San Diego, its historical, its cultural, its environmental resources.

Ironically, the United Nations Ramsar Convention recently bestowed the prestigious label of "Wetlands of International Importance" on this 2,500-acre national wildlife refuge and state park that you are going to destroy.

Now, we know we have to have border security. We live right there. You think we want to be overrun with terrorists? We know what it takes. We know what a smart border is. And what you are suggesting is not a smart border. For a minimal security benefit and maximum dollars spent, you will do irreparable damage to areas along the western portion of the U.S.-Mexico border.

This multitiered fence, road building, cut and fill, shaving down of mountains will destroy, as I said, an environmentally sensitive area, violate several sections of the Coastal Act and destroy acres of sensitive habitat and wetlands and coastline.

This sensitive habitat plays a vital role in the sustainability of the binational ecosystem. Vote down this bill.